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BOOK REVIEWS



A PAMPHLET of fifty pages has been published by a German Red Cross sister, Schwester Clementine von Wallmenich, of Munich, in which she discusses the position of the superintendent of nurses in modern hospitals and the limitations of a nurse's work in caring for male patients. Miss Krüer, a graduate of the German Hospital, has translated these articles, from the latter of which we take the following abstract:

"The subject of the nursing of men by women nurses is one that every woman will hesitate to approach, but I force myself to deal with this question because I consider it wrong to judge of a matter in which women's sensibilities play so important a part without hearing women's views on the subject.

"At present we have (in Germany) a strong public movement against the nursing of men by women, it being claimed that it is immoral.

"I do not agree with this position, taken so broadly, but acknowledge its truth in some cases.

"In large cities we do find some immoral nursing of men by women, partly because done in the wrong spirit and by the wrong people. It should be impersonal service, such as the religious orders gave, and as it presents temptations which not all women can withstand, no woman working independently should take such work, but the nurse should belong to some association, even if of a purely worldly character, through which she may be guided and supervised.

"These associations should have the recognition and supervision of the State, as hospitals have at present, and the nurse ought to wear a uniform legally recognized and protected.

"The religious sisters of the Middle Ages were held high above all personal relations. As the religious idea weakened, this high conception of the profession of 'sister' or 'nurse' also weakened, until among the unorganized independent nurses of to-day there is not an atom of this spirit to be found, and it is this fact that gives the key to the present deplorable condition. Not the nursing of men is immoral, but the way in which it is undertaken.

"Not all nurses to-day can become nuns, but every woman who wishes to become a nurse should enter the profession with a high idea of its sacredness.

"It is a mistake to think it enough to instruct nurses in technical matters, and leave out the moral part. To-day the development of the intellect is more thought of than the upbuilding of moral strength: the former may be taught by books, the latter only by example. Therefore nurses should form associations, in which good example may help them to become stronger and nobler women. The nature of nursing work is such that it requires strong, healthy, young women, and therefore there are many temptations connected with it.

"We hear it suggested that the nursing of men should only be done by religious sisters or by men, but neither of these suggestions are timely or practical. Of religious sisters there are not nearly enough to cover the ground, and as to men, everyone acquainted with hospital life knows that there are very few good male nurses. It is rarely the very best element among men who be-

come nurses, although an occasional one may have all the qualities needed for a good nurse.

"A good woman may approach anything necessary in the care of the sick without self-consciousness, and, as far as the patient is concerned, it is of inestimable value to him in time of illness to have the tender, gentle care of a woman.

"To sum up: it is right and proper for a woman nurse to care for men patients, but she should be a member of an association supervised by the State; her uniform should be protected; she should have had an education given her by a conscientious and high-minded superior, and an examination and diploma given her by the State."



DRUGS EXCRETED BY THE MILK.—The *Journal of the American Medical Association* says the following is a list of drugs which are excreted by the milk and which, consequently, affect the infant: Sulphur, rhubarb, senna, jalap, indigo, arsenic, bismuth, iron, mercury, potassium iodide, zinc iodine, antimony, opium, oil of anise, oil of dill, garlic, castor-oil, lead, oil of turpentine, oil of copaiba, all volatile oils, magnesium sulphate, carbolic acid, quinine, and cascara sagrada. The elimination of these drugs by the milk is more liable to take place when the mother is in a disturbed condition physically and when the mammary glands are not in a normal condition. Consequently care must be observed in prescribing some of these preparations for the mother. For example, copaiba and turpentine will so affect the taste of the milk as to cause the infant to refuse the breast. Diarrhœa may be produced in the infant by administering castor-oil or other of the above purgatives to the mother, and the opium preparations will produce the opposite effect on the child through the mother's milk. It is said that sufficient action may be produced on the child by administering mercury, arsenic, and potassium iodide to the mother.

THE USE OF ALKALIES IN RELIEVING PAIN.—Lauder Brunton in the *British Medical Journal* calls attention to the fact that the presence of acid in a carious tooth is a most potent cause of toothache. Dyce Duckworth has shown how toothache may be stopped as if by magic by putting into the cavity a little cotton dipped in sodium bicarbonate, thus neutralizing the acidity. It may be mixed with laudanum or cocaine or both, or it may be used alone. When pain is felt in all the teeth, it often depends upon irritation of the roots of the teeth, just at the edge of the gums, by acid fluid in the mouth. This pain may be generally relieved by rubbing a little sodium bicarbonate along the edge of the gums; or by rinsing the mouth with a solution of sodium bicarbonate. The strength is not important. A teaspoonful to half a tumbler of water answers well. The writer then speaks of his own experiences with boils. These were very painful, and he took sodium bicarbonate by mouth with benefit. Later he applied a solution to the boils themselves with the most satisfactory results. He speaks of the more extended use of alkalies in neuralgia. The relief in these cases after taking food not unlikely depends more on the secretion of acid in the stomach and consequent increase in the alkalinity of the blood than on any change in the circulation. In this case the free use of sodium bicarbonate and potassium bicarbonate in such cases may help to give relief.